[171] 831 [72] Unlike their neighbors in JUNGLE PEOPLE Paraná the Kaingáng have no love magic. They are, in general, a very practical and aggressive people and not given to the use of charms. They view all people but little children as spontaneously, vigorously and indiscriminately sexual, and act accordingly.

The young man who, urged at last by his desire for a woman to cook and keep house for him, and the young woman who, impelled by her wish to have someone who will constantly care for her, at last settle down with a spouse, have this background of philandering, jesting and frequently adulterous sexual experience that will color married life into old age. [964] Kaingáng men and women are not advised by their parents to be faithful to one another. The only case I heard of is that of Amendó who was one of the wives of Wanyekí. When she and her sisters married him her mother said to her: "Live with him. If they leave him, you remain with him." And she always did.[3]

587 586 In our society the traditional, the ideal stabilizer of marriage is love—an exclusive sex interest in one person. The Kaingáng have no tradition, no background for the development of such an interest. Marriage in other [523] primitive societies is sometimes stabilized by a large payment for the bride, but in Kaingáng society there is no such payment. If a woman leaves her husband she can always find a relative who will take care of her. Her brother or her cousin or her sister will always take her in, and although she lacks the full security that marriage gave her she need not starve, for there are any number of men who will accept her as an added responsibility without complaint, even boasting a little that they took care of her and that she called them *y4gn*.[3] Besides having this dependable bulwark to her security a woman's own aggressiveness makes it far easier for her to get another husband than for a woman in a similar position in our society. When a woman is left without a husband the liaisons which she has established surreptitiously serve her in good stead, for then one of her lovers may become her new husband.[4]

616 Chukembégn had been having some trouble with his wife, Chantégn. When he left her for a few days to go hunting he told his hunting companions that he was going to leave his wife. News got back to the post before he returned. One day Chantégn, who had previously amused herself by casual approaches to me, called me. I came out of my house and sat down where anyone who happened to be around could see us. "What do

[3] See p. 30. These people have been long dead.

[3] See Appendix II, p. 177. Such a woman can partially earn her keep by gathering fruit and wood, helping with the cooking and the children, and clearing the ground for camp sites. If she has lovers they will contribute to the family larder.

[4] Sometimes, though rarely, former husbands may become lovers, but this does not occur where the woman herself has rejected them as husbands.

2: Henry E-5 (1932-1934) 1941
SM3 Caingang SM3
Aweikoma

you want?" said I. "Chukembégn is going to leave me." "Oh, no, he isn't." 586
"Yes, he is. He said so up the river and they are talking about it." "But he is not going to leave you." "How do you know?" "He told me." "What did he tell you?" "He told me that he loves you." I used the strongest term that the language has to offer, a term that I heard used only in folktales. "But he *is* going to leave me. Julio, if he leaves me, will you marry me?" "No," said I; "I never marry anyone." And there the matter rested.[8]

A man separated from his wife may live with someone else and share 581
his fire. At the worst he can cook his own meals and spread his own bed, 593
for no shame attaches to a man who does a woman's work. But after a 855
woman has borne three children a marriage does not break up. The 764
woman needs the man to take care of her children, and Kaingáng men are 766
fond fathers. There is no end to the fondling and delousing a child gets from its father and other men. He makes toys for it and takes it hunting for company. Nowadays they are as much interested in having their little girls decked out in brand new calico dresses as American mothers are in getting their children permanent waves. Even in death parents do not relinquish their children, for, they say, a child who dies before the age of about twelve returns to its mother's womb and is reborn. The corpse of a grown-up is placed on the funeral pyre, pounded on the chest and told to go away, and summarily burnt. But, I was told, a little child is placed in a grave, covered with wholesome herbs and begged to return. Its mother puts a little honey and meat aside for it, puts her baby's carrying-band on her head and walks about crying, "Come here, come here! Come and eat the meat and honey I have put aside for you. If you stay in some other camp one will be angry with you! Come back! Come back!"

Except for the somewhat aberrant Chukembégn there is not a single case 586
of a marriage dissolved after three children had been born. Chukembégn was a child of about nine when the Kaingáng settled on the reservation, and he grew up in close contact with the agent. He married Tendó but left her after she had borne him three children. His present wife, Chantégn, "led him away by the hand." Now he rarely goes near Tendó, but she is still regarded as his wife. Two years after leaving her he still buys cloth for her to make dresses for herself and her children. Yet idle tongues will wag, and one day when Chukembégn, Klendó, and I were hunting together, Chukembégn burst out: "It is not true that I ignore her. I got medicine and bought a chicken for her when she was ill!" Klendó observed mildly that he had never said that Chukembégn had not taken care of her. Then Chukembégn, turning to me, blurted in Portuguese: "This man has

[8] I mention this, and other cases in which I myself have been one of the names, not because they are the only instances of the kind that I have, but because they are usually the most complete.

2: Henry E-5 (1932-1934) 1941
SM3 Caingang SM3
Aweikoma

586 been saying that I have not been taking care of that woman, but I have!" Tendó had not married again and the community refused to admit that Chukembégn's obligations to her were ended.

Indeed I have no way of telling what would happen if a woman in such a position remarried, for Kaingáng society has no other such case to offer in more than a hundred and fifty years of its history.[6] Unless a woman is separated from her husband under the conditions of vendetta, a couple with several children stays together till death. Although the case of Chukembégn and Tendó is isolated it emphasizes the Kaingáng attitude toward marriages of long standing that have produced several children. The breaking up of Tendó's household left the society confused as to just how it should treat Chukembégn for there were no parallel instances. So they simply continued to insist that he owed some kind of support to Tendó, even though he planted his field with Chantágn, seldom went to visit Tendó, and that only when absolutely necessary, and maintained the most tenuous relations with her family.

581 But separations before many children are born are legion. Young people frequently pass through one or two marriages before they finally settle down. The relationship between the sexes is informal, and there is no marriage ceremony. In its early stages the only thing that distinguishes a marriage from a protracted affair is the announcement by the principals that they are married. There is no term for marriage. The Kaingáng use the term *sé*, to sit, to express the husband-wife relationship. "He sat with her" means "he married her." Sometimes people do not know whether a couple who have separated have ever been "married." Even before marriage a man and woman may go hunting together, and unless her family takes it upon itself to "send her to him" or the man and woman themselves decide to set up a household, the relationship between the two remains unchanged. The man may even hunt with his sweetheart's relatives and contribute to the household's food supply without yet having the status of a husband. When one of the woman's brothers or sisters or parents see that she is pregnant they may "send her to" her most constant lover, but no stigma attaches to an extramarital birth. Mothers are just as passionately attached to their illegitimate[7] children as they are to their legitimate and all the children have equal chances in life. Illegitimacy, so often the pivotal point of some of the most dramatic episodes in our own and in primitive societies, is completely lacking in drama among the Kaingáng.

Though the Kaingáng know that unfaithfulness and brittleness are inevitable conditions of marriage among them, its implied permanence and

[6] My genealogies go back about two hundred years and include five hundred individuals of all ages. The fact that a woman has one or two children is no obstacle to her remarriage.

[7] I use this term simply to indicate children born out of wedlock.